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Insight into Lying Behaviour with Priming Effect: Three Studies of Using French Politicians and Presidents as Primers

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Priming is a non-conscious memory effect, in which exposure to one stimulus affects the response to another. Following priming theories, we propose an innovative view that people who perceived politicians as being dishonest (lying) are likely to lie themselves. To examine this view, three scenario-based studies (N = 218) were conducted; primers included the clergy, named French Presidents and political parties. **Study 1** demonstrated that participants with clergy priming were less likely to lie (compared to politician priming). **Study 2** indicated that participants with Sarkozy priming were more likely to lie (compared to Hollande priming). **Study 3** found that Sarkozy priming effect may originate from his political party rather Sarkozy himself. *These findings suggest that lying can be triggered by external influencers such as government leaders and politicians and this provides an alternative perspective to the current view of lying as interest-driven or self-protection behaviour, implications follow.*